

Retirements up despite trend throughout U.S.

Contrary to a national trend, many Highway Division employees are retiring before the age of 65.

Since 1976, in fact, over 70 percent of the retirements have been voluntary, according to ODOT personnel records. The favorite age has been 62, and several have even retired at 55.

A nationwide survey by Lou Harris and Associates indicates that 51 percent of Americans not only oppose mandatory retirements, but prefer to work at the same job, or a less demanding job, as an alternative to retirement.

And 53 percent of the 1,911 persons surveyed who had retired said they regretted the decision to retire.

Generally, workers are healthier and think work contributes to their own mental, physical and material well-being, according to Harris, the

See SURVEY, page seven

Glenn Jackson to leave OTC

Transportation Commission Chairman Glenn Jackson was appointed to the Economic Development Commission by Gov. Vic Atiyeh on March 21.

He is expected to take over as chairman of the seven-member commission April 27 — the 20th anniversary of his appointment to the Transportation Commission.

He will succeed Jack Meier, Portland, who has resigned.

In making the announcement, Atiyeh said he has instructed Jackson "to initiate an unprecedented economic development effort as a volunteer commissioner."

Jackson, 76, has been a dominant force in the development of transportation in Oregon. He is chairman of the executive committee of Pacific Power & Light Co., owns several Oregon newspapers, has served on the boards of numerous corporations.

Potholes attacked from several angles



Legislators, crews hit the road

February's freeze-thaw conditions in Central and Eastern Oregon produced a record-breaking crop of potholes, according to Highway officials. Some roads were so bad that crews relied on emergency measures, like filling holes with dirt and gravel (above left, taken on Hwy 97 south of Madras) before they could get around to asphalt patching. Meanwhile, the Senate Transportation Committee held hearings throughout the state to learn what changes Oregonians want the Legislature to make regarding local and state maintenance funds. At right, Transportation Committee Chairman Dell Isham talks to a citizen at a hearing in Hillsboro. Below, committee members, accompanied by a string of news media representatives, get a first-hand look at deterioration outside of Hillsboro.

DMV improvements take strides

Two milestones were reached last month in improving DMV services.

After months of planning, searching and negotiating, several new field offices opened in March and others are being remodelled or relocated (see story, page five).

"We haven't received many complaints about long lines recently," said DMV Administrator Skip Grover. "The new offices have helped a great deal."

The other milestone was reached on March 27 when Transportation Commissioners approved a request to seek \$248,405 in federal funds to design an improved driver licensing system.

Several ODOT employees, in cooperation with the Executive Department, have been studying licensing problems the past several months and have emerged with a plan to rescue what DMV officials describe as a "serious deterioration of customer service."

According to Tony DeLorenzo of the DMV Systems and Planning Section, the present system isn't efficient. Problems began when instant photo-licensing started in 1976, he said. Since then, licenses have been issued in field offices, but the data processing has been centralized in Salem.

This "network" has resulted in issuing licenses to ineligible drivers; not keeping records up to date; issuing licenses or identification cards to persons who submit fraudulent applications; and issuing licenses and daily reports with typographical errors.

"The problems mean higher costs, customer inconvenience and licenses in the hands of unqualified drivers."

The DMV proposal calls for installing mini-computers in Portland, Salem,

Eugene, Medford and Pendleton regional offices. Terminals would be installed in each field office. Currently, only a few field offices have terminals.

About 75 percent of license transactions could be processed without referring to the "host" computer in Salem, DeLorenzo said.

Cost benefits of the new system are

estimated to exceed its installation cost by over \$400,000, he said. Installation costs are estimated at \$2,981,197, and the DMV will consider applying for federal matching funds.

Vehicle registrations could also be processed in the new system. The DMV will look into that after phasing in the licensing system.

Road conditions settling down; fingers crossed

"We've got our fingers crossed on the weather for the next six weeks," said Dick Hawkins, district engineer in The Dalles, referring to road conditions in his area. Other engineers echoed his comments.

Hawkins said conditions are "settling down" since February's disastrous rains and thawing. "But there is still a lot of sick-looking road out there," he said.

John Gunter, Klamath Falls DE, described his area as "drastically improved," but needs much repair. Traffic is moving with few complaints.

Still wary

Highway Division personnel, despite recent good weather, are still wary. Heavy rains and fast thawing could again turn the highway system into another quagmire, especially in the central and eastern areas.

Load and speed restrictions imposed during February have been lifted. Bob Lammert, Bend DE, said he had placed advisory 35 mph signs on some roads to protect what is left.

Roads require substantial repair, and

some work will have to be contracted, he said.

The cost of the damage is still difficult to assess. Estimates range from \$5 to \$10 million, depending on the type of repairs.

Most western highways survived the winter fairly well, although there are some problems on the Santiam and the Eddyville-Blodgett Section of US 20.

Part of a bigger problem

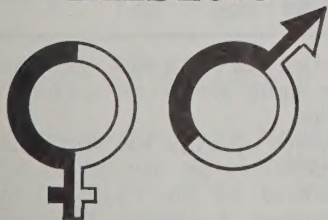
Analyzing the present situation, State Highway Engineer Scott Coulter said, "The pothole problem indicates a much larger problem, which is the age and deterioration of the entire system."

He said there are 1,285 miles of extremely deteriorated state highways needing immediate repair.

Generally, repair includes a new asphalt surface with shoulder and drainage improvements.

Various plans to rescue highways are being considered by the governor and legislators. For a closer look at these plans, see Legislative Update on page two.

Inside



Affirmative Action Office rolls into action with new plan, page seven.

Howard Read challenges employees to cut fuel use by 10 percent, page three.

What editors are saying about the potholes, page five.

Parks winds up massive CPR training before camping season opens, page five.

Bob Lammert tackles problems in the "heart" district, page eight.

Director's corner

FRED KLABOE



Good response to new DMV offices

Skip Grover, DMV administrator, has advised me that new field offices have been opened recently in Lincoln City, Florence, Sandy, Madras and Heppner. Offices in Stayton and Cedar Hills will also open soon.

I've already heard good words from some of the people in these communities. Funds spent to open these offices will, I'm sure, pay large dividends through increased appreciation by the public for additional services.

Hearings to result in funding bill

The Senate Transportation Committee has held hearings in Hillsboro, Wheeler, Lincoln City and Newport about our road conditions. They will hold more hearings in the South and Southeastern, Central and Northeastern parts of the state in the next few weeks.

They've been gathering public sentiment and ideas to fight our deterioration problem. General Fund appropriations and some sort of variable gas tax tied to the inflation rate are scoring high so far. After the hearings, the committee will write a bill for increasing revenues based on the results of the testimony heard.

ODOT should lead in saving fuel

Gov. Atiyeh has issued guidelines which he hopes Oregonians will follow to ease the energy crisis we are facing. Some of these include driving 10 miles less per week, and obeying the 55 mph speed limit.

In the department, our gasoline usage for state equipment increased over four percent last year, after tapering off the two years before. We are the biggest fuel user among state agencies and should lead in efforts to increase fuel efficiency.

There are many ways to improve without reducing our productivity. Learning to correct poor driving habits is just one of them. More details on how to conserve fuel are included in this issue of VIA. I encourage all employees, on and off the job, to concentrate on saving fuel.

Weighmasters have raised the concern that passage of SJR 7 (constitutional amendment to limit use of the Highway Fund), would eliminate them from the Highway Division budget.

According to a recent attorney general opinion, they are right. Under the bill, funding for all highway "policing activities" would be transferred out of the Highway Fund to the General Fund.

Scott Coulter and I are working with the Legislature's Ways and Means Subcommittee to amend the bill to keep weighmasters in the Highway Division's budget. We're confident the changes will be made.

Way Back When ...



Early "weighmasters" in 1924 stop a potato farmer (left) to check whether his truck exceeds Oregon's size and weight restrictions, first established in 1921. They used portable scales, visible beneath the tires. (By the look on his face, the farmer probably tossed a few more sacks on the wagon than he should have). The 1921 Legislature, during a special session, gave the Highway Commission authority to limit weights and speeds, and to hire six traffic officers throughout the state to patrol highways and arrest offenders (including drivers of over-loaded trucks).

The Oregon State Police Department wasn't formed until 1931, so this early corps was assigned to the Highway Department. However, since the officers enforced motor vehicle laws, they were administered through the Motor Vehicles Division of the Secretary of State's office.

'Limited edition' highway map is now available

The 1979 Official Oregon Highway map is now available, but not in the quantity circulated in past years.

There's a shortage, and the situation isn't expected to improve, at least not until after July 1, according to Victor Fryer, Travel Information Section manager.

The section normally prints 350,000 maps per year. This year, only 200,000 are being printed because of cuts in the section's printing budget this biennium.

"We don't have enough money to print more maps at this time," Fryer

said. Highway and DMV offices, and chamber of commerce visitor information centers have been asked to hand maps out only on request. Most distributors have been following that procedure in recent years, he said.

Minor additions and corrections were made on the map, which features an Oregon coast sunset on its cover.

The section received 50,000 maps so far. Limited amounts have been sent to distribution points, including ODOT field offices. More maps will be available after May 1.

Solons prepare packages to increase road funds

By George Bell

All of a sudden--thanks to Old Man Winter--efforts to increase funding for road repair are appearing from some important and influential sources.

The word "potholes" has appeared in front page headlines in virtually every newspaper in the state, while TV news reporters are having a field day focusing their cameras on pocked roads as cars clatter and clang their way over them.

The most dire predictions of our district engineers about highway deterioration over the last three years are coming true with a vengeance. And it's hard to resist saying, "We told you so," to the voters who have turned down three successive ballot measures.

But that's in the past, and the problem is now abundantly clear to every driver in Oregon. Here are some of the solutions being proposed:

—SJR 7, now under consideration in the Ways and Means Committee, would transfer Parks and State Police out of the Highway Fund to the General Fund netting about \$30 million annually for road repairs.

—Rep. Jeff Gilmour, co-chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and Rep. Max Rijken, have suggested using upwards of \$100 million from the state General Fund surplus for a one-shot road repair appropriation, rather than returning it to the voters in a tax rebate. Their idea is being talked about in the Capitol, and several legislators are surveying their constituents before they

take a position on the proposal.

—Gov. Vic Atiyeh announced a plan in mid-March that would, without tapping the General Fund surplus, appropriate about \$30 million to the Highway Fund, \$5.7 million to the



counties, and about \$5.3 million to the cities during the next biennium for road repairs.

Atiyeh's package has been added to the ODOT budget request, and will be considered by the Ways and Means Committee during the Department's budget hearings, which may be concluded, incidentally, by the time this edition of VIA is published.

Meanwhile, the road deterioration problem is so acute and widespread, several counties, and even a few cities, are pondering whether to try for a local-level gas tax increase. Clackamas, Deschutes and Multnomah counties, for example, are looking at a one-cent or two-cent per gallon increase, and John Lundell, mayor of The Dalles, is asking his council to study a one-cent increase.

In any case, two months of bad weather have made believers out of the most critical skeptics, and what used to be a question of "if," now seems only a matter of "when" and "how much."

A popular subject . . .

Up the gas tax

The Oregon Legislature is considering a variety of proposals to help finance our state highway system which is rapidly crumbling under the passage of our increased radials.

time that Oregonians comprehend and support a highway

Oh, holey roads:

By PATRICK O'NEILL
Democrat-Herald Writer

To hear local officials talk about it, you'd think mid-valley roads are packed with nothing but good locations. The people who are responsible for state roadways say they don't have enough money to fix roads properly—particularly after one of the most destructive winters in recent memory.

Fred Klaboe, director of the Department of Transportation, says this week in his system of help the state roads City and cos

State long on potholes, short on pots of gold

By ANKENBAKER
—political

extensive rebuilding even without the severe weather this winter, he says. "The highways were designed for the lighter vehicles and for the good weather. Now more

Chuck Holes: Roads 'Getting Tired'

By CAROL SISCO
Herald Staff Writer

Trying to miss chuck holes lately has been almost like driving a rental bumper car without a collision.

The annual frost-free season is over, and the roads are getting a little worse as fast as they are getting a little better. Age isn't the only factor in the water and the water is spreading it. State road County's "It's a breaking (Kess)

Thaw wreaks havoc on roads

SALEM (UPI) — Unusual freezing and thawing heavy rain and flooding have combined to make highway repair a top priority for the Oregon Department of Transportation, said a spokesman.

The department's road repair fund, which has been depleted by the winter's heavy rains, is now being replenished by the state's rainy season.

Highways hurting

Oregon's state highway system is in worse shape now than it was two years ago, according to a study just released by the Oregon Department of Transportation.

The current study notes that normal highway deterioration is being accelerated by rising costs have forced cutbacks in the repaving program, the department said.

Large chunks of highway are missing, and with over 100 miles of late highway bridge repairs, the department is in a bind.

Road repair funds must be a priority

There is another bit of urgent legislation under consideration in the state legislature these days besides the tax relief measures. Anyone who travels on roads other than Interstate 5 Freeway lately has a pretty good idea of what that urgent problem is.

Tens of miles of highways in this state are pitted with chuckholes. One can find the holes on Highway 126 both east and west of the metropolitan area, and they are getting worse by the day.

We're tempted to lay the blame at projected three measures in a row that would have provided additional gas tax or registration money to the highway department's road repair fund, but that would be implying that the problem has come about all at once in the past few years. Actually, the roads are falling apart rapidly because the Highway Department has

Blow dealt to roads

SALEM, Ore. (UPI) — Unusual weather has hit and hit again, and the state's highway system is in a bind.

The department's road repair fund, which has been depleted by the winter's heavy rains, is now being replenished by the state's rainy season.

Pothole patrol on duty

Pothole filling is a job for Oregon's highway department.

But the revenue to pay for it is in short supply. The department's road repair fund, which has been depleted by the winter's heavy rains, is now being replenished by the state's rainy season.

Roads Hazardous To Your Health

Currently, the state legislature is considering Senate Bill 7, a bill designed to increase the use of state highway funds for road repair.

They are a "Roads Hazardous To Your Health" measure. "If you have traveled recently on any of the roads and highways in this state, then you don't have to be told of the deteriorating condition which now exists.

In fact, driving on Oregon's roads is downright hazardous. Large chunks of highway are missing, and with over 100 miles of late highway bridge repairs, the department is in a bind.

Anyone traveling on any of the roads and highways in this state, then you don't have to be told of the deteriorating condition which now exists.

Highways 18 and 26 or even 101 can attest to the large and many potholes.

State legislators are now looking for ways to increase funds for maintenance and repairs of the state's highways.

We can't imagine that any other method of taxation could be more fair, yet voters said No.

Tests show ODOT can save gas

Howard Read plays a gas tank like some people play golf.

If the analogy seems strange consider this: A golfer challenges the course and his own previous score. Read, head of the Highway Equipment Shop, challenges his ability to increase his gas mileage with each tank by improving his driving (no pun intended) habits.

Read has completed a series of tests using a meter attached to a one-ton, 350-cubic inch engine truck. It measures mileage per one-tenth of a gallon.

"By improving my driving habits, I went from four-to-five miles per gallon at my worst driving, to nine-to-ten using my best habits," he said. Read tested himself driving 40 mph on a closed course. He plans to run more tests on smooth versus rough roads.

Reducing without losing

The "game" wasn't just a personal challenge. Read has a bigger goal in mind for ODOT, state government's largest vehicle owner and fuel user.

"I know we can reduce our fuel consumption by 10 percent, comply with the various federal regulations, Atiyeh's energy guidelines and not curtail our operations," he said, adding that ODOT would save \$17,000 a month, just by improving driving habits.

Increasing fuel prices and rumors of shortages point to a need "to really concentrate on saving," Read said. Each one-cent gas price increase costs ODOT \$50,000. The department uses about 4.8 million gallons of gas and diesel a year, bought from terminals throughout the state. (Unleaded is currently 58 cents; regular, 56; and diesel, 41).

Impatience is costly

Read's "bad habits" during his tests included stopping and starting quickly. "It shows my own impatience to get going," he said with a laugh. "You waste a teaspoon of gas each time you floor the throttle. It doesn't take long to waste a gallon."

Keeping a truck idling unnecessarily is a major problem Read sees in the Highway Division. "Some guys will keep the motor on for their roto-beams and radios," he said, "but that's no excuse to keep the motor on constantly, which often happens."

An idling dump truck will use one gallon per hour. "Of our 1,423 vehicles, I'd say about 500 of them idle half the day or longer -- that's at least 500 gallons a day," he said.

If computer records were more accurate, Read would encourage organized competition among crews in each district, among districts and even among regions. He prepared a list of fuel economy tips (included on this page) for employees in the Maintenance

Branch. The tips apply to all drivers.

Shifting to diesel

ODOT's gas consumption increased four percent last year, after declining significantly the two previous years. Diesel usage increased 18 percent.

"We are shifting emphasis to diesel,"

he said, explaining the sudden diesel increase. "It's cheaper, more economical and increases engine horsepower."

When asked about diesel's polluting effects, Read said the pollutants tend to be more "cosmetic" than harmful, compared to hydrocarbons found in gas. "Diesel is dirtier, more visible, but being

heavier, the pollutants are not as airborne as gas pollutants, so they don't spread as much."

The Highway Division has tested several fuel additives designed to increase efficiency, but so far, Read is skeptical. "You spend energy to get energy, and it has to pay off. Many of the new fuels, like gasohol (mixture of gas and alcohol) would require a lot of maintenance. Mixing for the proper ratio is also critical, because too much alcohol will break down the plastic components in carburetors. We're still open to new ideas, but the energy trade-off has to be right."

Solons look into variable gasoline tax

A variable state gas tax pegged to inflation and consumption rates is one of the proposals under review by legislative committees seeking to shore up the Highway Fund.

The "inflation-sensitive" formula submitted by ODOT would tie automatic annual increases or decreases in the state gas tax to the Portland area consumer price index. An eight percent annual hike in the index, for example, would trigger an eight percent increase in the gas tax the following year.

The formula is also tied, in an inverse ratio, to gasoline consumption. If statewide consumption declined by eight percent in one year, the gas tax would increase by about that same percentage the following year.

ODOT's formula also sets a ceiling of 11 cents per gallon and a limit of a penny a gallon increase in any one year.

Any inflation or consumption-triggered increase would be matched with an identical percentage boost in truck weight-mile rates.



Howard Read checks the meter that measures his gas mileage. By improving driving habits, he says employees can reduce fuel consumption by 10 percent without curtailing operations.

Workers can increase mileage through feather-footed driving

With gas prices skyrocketing, and fuel sources reportedly heading in the other direction, state employees are being asked by the governor to save fuel by joining carpools, using more mass transit, and setting thermostats lower.

Gov. Atiyeh is also recommending a 10 percent reduction in availability of state vehicles and a moderate expansion in shuttlebug services.

Correcting poor driving habits is another way to save gas. Howard Read, Equipment Unit supervisor for the Highway Division, compiled the following information for VIA.

Some factors have an effect on fuel consumption, but can't be controlled by drivers, he said. These include:

1. Air temperatures. Weather over 70 degrees increases fuel economy by as much as eight percent over air temperatures at 20 degrees.

2. Poor road conditions can lower fuel efficiency from 10 to 30 percent.

3. Wind can increase or decrease efficiency. For example, an 18 mph tail wind could add a 12 percent gain. A head wind of the same amount could lessen efficiency by 10 percent.

Make it a game

Read suggests making a game out of saving fuel. Compare each tank of gas with the last. Record the mileage driven and fuel used. Include notes such as weather, road conditions, type of driving, like rural or urban. Keep records of at least five tanks.

Here are some efficiency tips:

1. Engine warm-up periods can be reduced, providing heavy acceleration and higher speeds are not reached until the engine is warm. Remember, it takes more energy to keep an engine running

when cold.

2. Smooth, even accelerations prevent dumping over-rich fuel into the intake manifold (a "lead foot" on the throttle can waste 20 percent of the fuel). Some tests show as much as a 40 percent reduction in efficiency from one driver to another.

3. Avoid sudden stops. This is like throwing energy away.

4. Obey 55 mph law. Most vehicles, when driven below 60 mph, don't use the extra high speed fuel jets and save considerable fuel.

5. Maintain vehicle and engine to manufacturer's specifications. Keep tires at proper pressure, wheels aligned and lubrication maintained.

Read said there is no accurate way to measure miles per gallon by using comparison road tests without using expensive testing equipment. Therefore, personal record keeping should be considered as estimates only.

SAIF awards

The following crews earned SAIF awards recently.

Maintenance Crew 122-01, Salem; 56,325 man-hours without time-loss injuries; Richard Moffitt, supervisor.

Maintenance Crew 123-05, Newport; 60,995 man-hours; Melvin Beachy, supervisor.

Park Crew 420-11, Cape Lookout; 150,762 man-hours; Dale Hoeye, supervisor.

Engineering Crew 080-51, Portland; 50,000 man-hours without time-loss injuries. Jerry Street, supervisor.

LaGrande Shop Crew 104-01; 62,900 man-hours without time-loss injuries. Carl Goldsby, supervisor.

NTW group picks theme

"Serving Oregon on the Move" will be the theme of ODOT's National Transportation Week activities scheduled May 13 to 19.

The NTW committee, headed by Bob Gormsen, is seeking ideas for displays and demonstrations from employees. So far, the committee has secured much of the equipment and displays used last year, including the National Highway Safety Administration air bag car.

Many of the displays will be geared to grade-school children, according to Gormsen.

Region offices are planning events similar to last year's. Region 3, however, is not participating in the week.

NTW is sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. Its purpose is to acquaint the public with ODOT's services and modes of transportation.

Archeologist dies

Edward Long, former archeologist for the Parks Branch, died of an apparent heart attack at his home in Washington, D.C., March 22. He was 38.

Long was archeologist for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a branch of the U.S. Executive Department. After working two years for ODOT, he left last July to take the position. He was the first archeologist employed by ODOT, and by the national council.

He established ODOT's program to review federally-funded projects for compliance with historic preservation laws and was in the process of setting up similar procedures on the national scale.

"He was also very instrumental in passing Oregon's 1977 bill to protect Native American burial grounds," said David Powers, head of the Historic Preservation Unit where Long worked.

"He was widely respected by the Indian community, and by archeologists throughout the state," Powers said.

Long received his BA degree from the University of Pittsburgh and his MA from the University of the Americas in Mexico City. He had completed two years' work toward his Ph.D. He spoke and wrote fluently in Spanish.

He was a meterologist for the U.S. Air Force before teaching archeology at the University of Oregon and anthropology at Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario.

J. Doug Walker, who retired from the Highway Department in 1962, died Feb. 2 in Salem. He was 86.

He started as a civil engineer in 1946. He worked 10 years before retirement as a region engineer in Salem.

(More obituaries on page five)



Perry to head biggest region

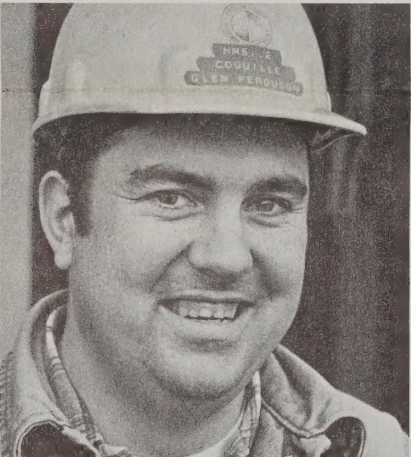
Vivian Perry Has become the first woman to be named a DMV regional supervisor.

Perry, a 25-year DMV veteran, heads field operations in the state's largest region, the Central/Northwest Region, formerly headed by Jack Spencer who retired in January. The region includes 22 offices and 112 employees.

Ms. Perry worked toward her new job after becoming assistant supervisor in the Central Region in 1974. "It was a goal I set for myself," she said.

Perry began as a clerk-typist in 1953, when the DMV was part of the Secretary of State's office. She typed titles and registrations.

She then worked in a variety of clerical positions and in 1970 was promoted to a driver examiner in Eugene.



Glen Ferguson, HMS 2

The following employees were promoted recently.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Bobby D. Aldrich, HWY, highway engineer 3 to 4, LaGrande.
 Donald R. Anderson, HWY, engineering technician 1 to 2, Milwaukie.
 Frank D. Arnold, PARKS, management assistant, Salem, to manager 3, The Cove Palisades State Park.
 Bartlett W. Bailey, HWY, highway maintenance worker 3, Roseburg, to HMW 4, Winston.
 Craig D. Barklow, PARKS, ranger 1 to 2, Cape Blanco State Park.
 Jan Bennett, PARKS, ranger 1 to 2, Shore Acres State Park.
 Lawrence H. Bower, HWY, HMW 3 to carpenter, Salem.
 Robert L. Bowlin, Jr., HWY, HMW 2 to 3, Parkdale.
 Gregory S. Bowman, HWY, right of way agent 2, Roseburg, to agent 3, Eugene.
 Larry P. Christianson, engineering aide to ET 1, Portland.
 Roy Lee Clark, HWY, HMW 4 to highway maintenance supervisor 2, Albany.
 Frederick Clemo, HWY, weighmaster 1, Eugene to weighmaster 2, Portland.
 Charles Close, HWY, HMW 2, Grants Pass, to electrician, Salem.
 Gary Colfax, HWY, HE 1 to 2, Roseburg.
 Narciso Espinoza, HWY, HMW 2 to 3, Portland.
 Glen Lee Ferguson, H1 to 2, Coquille.

Landscaper rejuvenates nursery

Bill Melton has been planting trees and shrubs, pruning, and correcting other gardeners' mistakes for 35 years.

Reclaiming four acres of abandoned nursery from the weeds at Champoege State Park, then, is no monumental task for the new landscape foreman in Region 1.

Melton declined to describe his first impression of the weedpatch when he started the job last January.

"I'll just say it needed help," he said with a good-natured chuckle.

Melton, 50, was hired to rejuvenate the park's nursery and landscape three new Willamette Greenway parks: Dexter, Molalla River, and Willamette Mission (formerly Lone Tree Bar).

He follows "blueprints" from the Parks Branch landscape designers in Salem.

According to Loyd Mitchell, manager at Champoege, the nursery was neglected for several years because his staff didn't have the time or expertise to maintain it.

"Propagating our own native trees and shrubs will also save money," Mitchell said. "The price of trees has gone out of sight."

Melton is a small, softspoken man with sharp blue eyes. When he can, he recruits help from Champoege park rangers, but does most of the work himself. It's hard work, but, "I can't think of anything else I'd rather do," he said.

Melton has owned landscaping businesses in California and Eugene, and has worked for the federal government in the Midwest.

"I'm interested in everything from

tulips to gibberelic acid (plant growth stimulant)," he said, noting that he was one of the first in the country to import black tulips from Holland.

Although he started landscaping at age 15, "I still learn something new every day," Melton said. "Plants are like people. No two are alike, even within the same species. Each has its own growing habits, needs and

personalities."

Melton eventually hopes to offer landscaping services and plants to the entire parks system, thus eliminating costly trips to private nurseries.

"That's a ways off," he said. "It will take about two years before the nursery produces to my satisfaction. 'I'm buying a lot of stock now, and soon hope to build a lathhouse.'"



Bill Melton, new landscape foreman hired by the Parks Branch works in his nursery.

Moving up the ranks

James M. Findt, HWY, HMW 4, Eugene, to HMS 2, The Dalles.

Leon H. Gunderson, HWY, HE 1 to 2, Portland.

James Harney, PARKS, ranger 1, Fort Stevens, to ranger 2, Rooster Rock State Park.

David C. Henry, HWY, HMW 3 to 4, Coquille.

Monty Ray James, HWY, HMW 2 to 3, Winston.

Carl D. Jamieson, PARKS, ranger 2, Cape Blanco to manager 1, Rooster Rock State Park.

Terry Lee Kimpel, HWY, HMW 2, Milwaukie, to HMW 3, Portland.

Jacklyn C. Kittelson, HWY, secretary to administrative assistant, Salem.

Michael E. Kleffner, HWY, ET 1 to 2, Milwaukie.

Thomas A. Kuhlman, HWY, ET 1 to HE 1, Coquille.

Walter E. Matson, Jr., PARKS, ranger 1 to 2, South Beach State Park.

Daniel R. Moffitt, HWY, HMW 3 to electrician, Salem.

Gerald L. Morrison, HWY, HE 1 to 2,

Salem.

Jerry G. McDonald, HWY, general mechanic 2 to ET 3, Salem.

Richard W. Nathe, PARKS, ET 2, Eugene, to HE 1, Salem.

Lawrence A. Pierson, HWY, EA, Portland, to geologist 1, Salem.

Jarard G. Richardson, HWY, HE 2 to 3, Portland.

Paul M. Sanger, Jr., HWY, EA to ET 1, Portland.

Lawrence Schmitt, HWY, HMS 1 to 3, Astoria.

Daniel W. Shaffer, HWY, ET 1 to HE 1, Portland.

Lyle L. Stevens, HWY, HMW 3 to 4, Central Point.

Joseph R. Stupfel, HWY, right of way agent 2, Bend, to agent 3, Salem.

Tim H. Thex, HWY, HE 1, Portland, to HE 2, Salem.

Kenneth Twidwell, HWY, HMW 2, Prospect, to ET 1, The Dalles.

Joyce Veal, ADMIN, secretary to administrative assistant, Salem.

Walter H. Wakerlig, HWY, HE 4 to 5, Salem.



Charles Close, electrician

Rodger W. Walenciak, HWY, HMW 2, Odell Lake to HMW 3, Chiloquin.

Carmen A. Wells, HWY, secretary to administrative assistant, Roseburg.

DMV PROMOTIONS

Cindy Betker, clerical assistant to specialist, Salem.

Dolores Casey, motor vehicle rep 1 to 2, Beaverton.

Gail Cheshire, MVR 1, West Eugene, to MVR 2, Gladstone.

Jo Ellen Foyle, MVR 1 to 2, Burns.

Reba Hamon, MVR 1 to 2, Prineville.

Laura Jeffrie, clerical assistant, Salem, to MVR 1, Lake Oswego.

Marvin Jones, MVR 2 to 3, Enterprise.

Paul Kasch, MVR 1, Medford, to MVR 2, Grants Pass.

Patricia Lowe, clerical specialist, Salem, to MVR 1, North Portland.

Doug Mauselle, laborer 1, East Portland, to MVR 1, Hillsboro.

Rose McCoy, MVR 2, Medford, to MVR 3, Heppner.

Robert Mikkelsen, MVR 1, Klamath Falls, to MVR 2, Lebanon.

Richard Neith, MVR 2 to 3, Lakeview.

Vivian Perry, MVR 4, Eugene, to program executive 1, Salem.

Rosalie Rise, MVR 1 to 2, East Eugene.

Laura Rose, MVR 1 to 2, John Day.

Malcolm Sinclair, clerical assistant to specialist, Salem.

Dianne Stark, clerical specialist to MVR 1, East Portland.

Sylvia Stephens, clerical assistant to specialist, Salem.

Jerry Timbs, MVR 1 to 2, Grants Pass.

Trans-Trivia

TRANSPORTATION QUIZ

1. Vehicular traffic totalled 87 million miles in 1967. What was the 1977 total?

a. 250 million b. 425 million c. 600 million

2. Which is the safest way to travel? The most dangerous?

a. Intercity bus, small plane b. Auto, air carrier c. Amtrak, motorcycle

3. The department began to promote tourism in what year, and how much did it spend?

a. 1925, \$3,000 b. 1935, \$48,000 c. 1941, \$65,000

4. What percent (roughly) of the total fuel tax dollars collected by the DMV is transferred to the Highway Fund after collection costs and other refunds for non-highway uses are deducted?

a. 89% b. 93% c. 97%

DMV offices open; reception good

New DMV field offices opened last month in Lincoln City, Florence, Sandy, Heppner and Madras. North Salem's new field office, adjacent to the main office, opened on April 2.

"We've had a great response from the public," said Harvey Ward, DMV deputy administrator, who attended opening ceremonies for the offices. "Our field people are also very happy about their new situations."

All but Sandy and Salem offices are operated by one employee. "Some of our people took voluntary demotions to work in these offices," Ward said. "One-person offices are becoming more popular. The atmosphere is often friendlier, more relaxed in smaller towns."

We'll remember

Several retirees and former employees died last month.

W. H. "Bill" Haskin, 65, died March 23 of a brain tumor while visiting his sister in California. Until that time he had enjoyed excellent health.

He will be remembered for his 28 years with the Right-of-Way Section of the Highway Division—the last 20 years as property manager.

One of his main tasks was to supervise the clearing of all right-of-way acquired properties just prior to the beginning of highway construction. Major projects were the East Bank, Minnesota and Stadium Freeways in Portland.

He began with the division in 1947, and retired as a right-of-way agent 4 in 1975, working the entire time out of the Salem office.

As a charter member of the Beaver State Chapter of the American R/W Association, he gained the recognition of senior r/w agent 47, a mark of superior professional status in the association.

According to co-workers, Bill was a friendly, soft-spoken man with a ready smile he found difficult to conceal.

His wife, Juanita, and son, Craig, survive.

...

James L. Don, 71, died Feb. 26 in Portland. He had worked for almost 40 years in Eastern Oregon and Portland before retiring in 1971.

Born in Scotland, Don worked during the 1930s as a chain man in Eastern Oregon. He came to Portland in 1946, where one of his biggest projects was working on the Minnesota Freeway (I-5). He also worked on the Banfield.

...

Lyle J. Sacre, long-time cabinet maker for the department, died March 4 after a lengthy illness in Salem. He was 74.

Sacre started in 1934 on a bridge crew. He worked most of his 34 years with the Highway Department in Salem as a lead carpenter.

He was a member of Masonic Lodge 50, Scottish Rite and was past patron of Hannah Rosa Court Amaranth.

...

Frank Walters, 88, died March 8 in Lebanon. He was a retired highway engineer. Walters started with the Highway Department in 1946 as a resident engineer (civil engineer 2) and retired in 1961 as a CE 3.

...

Bill Erwin, Jr., former technical report writer for ODOT, died March 15 of a heart attack at his home in Los Angeles, Calif. He was 53.

Erwin worked in Salem from 1973 to April, 1978, when he moved to California to get married and attend college. He was active in Los Angeles theater, TV shows and worked on movies. He was also active in theater in Salem.

Born in Astoria, he attended Salem schools, Oregon State University, and received a master's degree from the University of Washington, Seattle.

New managers include Cal Hammar (Lincoln City); Ruth Humphrey (Florence); John Martin (Sandy); Rose McCoy (Heppner) and Marie Grant (Madras). Earl Crabb and his North Salem field office crew will transfer their operations to the new building.

Other field offices are in various stages of relocation. A new location for

the East Salem office is being sought.

A new office in Stayton will open in May, and new locations are being sought for Bend, McMinnville, East Eugene, Medford and Grants Pass offices. The division is planning to house East Eugene and Grants Pass offices with the Parks and Highway offices.

Major remodeling has been

completed at the Albany office. The Tillamook, The Dalles, Burns and Astoria offices will also be remodeled.

Last October, the Legislative Emergency Board approved spending \$571,760 to finance new offices and relocate the others. The action was requested to ease the increasing workload on field offices.

Goal is 100%

Ranger trains co-workers in CPR

When the park season begins this month, almost all rangers will be able to administer abdominal thrusts, mouth-to-mouth, pulse checks and chest compressions.

These are some of the skills that about 300 workers will have learned by April 11 in CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) classes taught by a fellow employee, Keith Culley.

"We wanted to train field people before the parks opened, but the Highway Safety Section had all the work they could handle," said Ray Leavitt, head of Parks field operations. "So we decided to do it ourselves. We're shooting for 100 percent of our field staff."

Park rangers are prime targets for CPR training, Leavitt said. "Heart attacks have increased in parks. One person died last year at Detroit Lake," he said. "Also most parks are isolated and rangers are often the only ones around to handle emergencies."

Leavitt couldn't have picked a better trainer. Culley, a ranger 1 at Cape Blanco, has taught CPR, and owned and operated an ambulance service near Sacramento for several years before moving to Oregon in 1977.

Several well-qualified trainers in the branch applied for the job. "The response was great," said Steve Johansen, Leavitt's assistant who helped start the training program. "We interviewed three highly qualified employees."

Culley started training employees in January. He teaches up to eight employees per day-long class. "People can go at their own pace, get more individual help," he said. "They spend



What looks like a gang fight is actually an abdominal thrust demonstration, given by CPR instructor Keith Culley to David Powers during a training session last month in Salem. Observing, from left, are John Lilly, Jim Payne, and Wally Hibbard of the Parks Branch.

50 percent of their time practicing."

Culley said he designed the class "for people who know nothing about CPR training."

He's been pleased with the enthusiasm shown by employees. "They're a good, quick group and pleasant to work with," he said.

Leaving the 'rat race'

The branch spent about \$5,000 for equipment and Culley's time. He is paid as a ranger 1, and works at Cape Blanco inbetween classes.

Culley, 45, has no regrets leaving his

ambulance business and California, where he and his wife were born and raised.

"We made the mistake of driving up the southern Oregon coast," he joked. "We fell in love with it, went back and sold the business."

"I was also working every day and suddenly realized that my three kids were growing up -- and I'd hardly seen them. I wanted to take life easier and spend time with them."

Being a park ranger is hard work, however. "I was out of shape. But I was raised on a ranch and enjoy the work."

Editors 'shake fingers' at public

Recent editorials about Oregon's road conditions have been almost as plentiful as the potholes themselves.

Many newspapers are editorially shaking their fingers at the public for defeating gas tax and vehicle registration increase measures designed to help rescue state and local roads. Without exception, editorial writers agree: Something must be done -- soon.

Here are some of their comments.

Eugene Register-Guard: "Why doesn't somebody do something? Because the State Highway Division hasn't the money to finance a proper pavement-repair program and the people of this state -- and their legislators -- don't seem to realize that this is an extremely penny-wise, pound-foolish situation."

The *Guard* is skeptical of SJR 7, however. "It calls for submission of a constitutional amendment to the people that would lock state-collected highway

Two retire

Two employees retired last month. They are:

Andrew John Muth, highway maintenance worker 3, Jordan Valley, 24½ years.

Mildred Vogt, motor vehicle rep 2, Grants Pass, 10 years.

revenues to the construction, repair and maintenance of state highways and bar all other disbursements. . . it would also block payments from the highway revenues kitty to cities and counties and leave them much more reliant upon highly unpopular local property taxes."

The *Pendleton East Oregonian:* "The \$64,000 question is whether the state's voters -- who have turned down two tax gas increases at the polls in recent years -- will go along when it comes time for them to lend their assent to an adequate funding scheme."

The *Springfield News:* "The problem is reaching critical proportions, as anyone who drives very far out of town to the east or west can easily see. Something must be done this session, or motorists will find themselves worrying not about the 55 mph speed limit, but trying to maintain half of that while dodging giant chuckholes."

The *Lake Oswego Review:* "It's about time that Oregonians comprehend the seriousness of the situation and support a highway refurbishing project, through an increase in the state gas tax. It's about time . . . we have no choice."

The *Coos Bay World:* "The difficulty in getting a gas tax plan by voters is convincing them the money will indeed be used entirely for roads. The Legislature this session will have to shuffle some money around, funding

state police, parks and other areas from sources other than the Highway Fund.

"The talk about using surplus dollars for highway repair isn't a bad one, although it carries an obvious problem. . . highways shouldn't have any more priority for extra funding than any number of other state programs. . . But Oregon's primary and secondary systems are in such bad shape that they need all the financial help they can get."

The *Oregon Journal:* "Another crack at a gasoline tax increase is in order. It is inconceivable that the people of Oregon are content with a deteriorating highway system that damages their expensive automobiles, jeopardizes their health and threatens their ability to travel where they wish."

The *Portland Oregonian:* "The voters of Oregon backed potholes when they turned down motor vehicle tax increases at the past two general elections. . . money for roads ought to be assessed to the users and not taken from the general fund or other revenue sources."

The *Cottage Grove Sentinel:* "Remember last May when the state asked you to approve a two-cent increase in the gasoline tax? The argument advanced at that time was that the highway department was falling behind in road repairs and the problem would get worse unless more money was forthcoming."



Jerry Robertson is VIA's inquiring photographer. He selects his own subjects. VIA's editors frame the question of the month. Answers are edited only for length.

CANDID COMMENTS

Are you planning to retire early? If so, why?



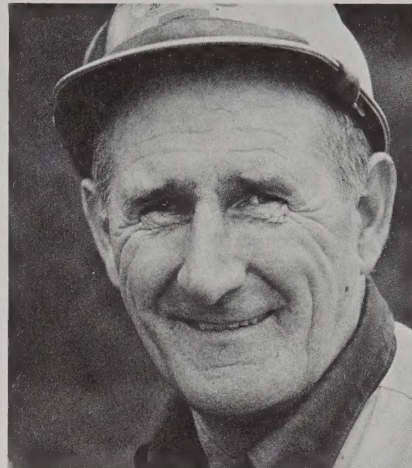
**MRYON HEESACKER, HWY
HMW 3, Manning**

Sounds great. I would like to retire early because it would help unemployment and advancement.



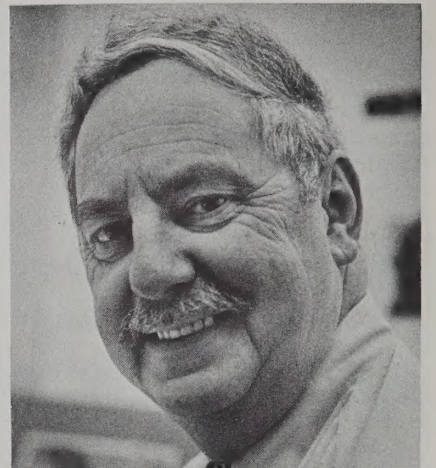
**EFFIE ELLEN SMITH, DMV
MVR 1, Pendleton**

Early retirement is inviting, with the "mercury" moving from eager to reluctant. The anticipation of time, finances, inflation, health and activities all influence the mercury. Enjoying my work and serving the public adds to the reluctance. But the excitement of not having to punch the time clock sends the mercury up. I still don't know if I'll retire early.



**BILL CROUCH, HWY
HMS 1, Lincoln City**

You bet I do. The sooner you retire, the longer you live. At 62, I'll have quite a few years of pleasure left, and good benefits. There's a lot I want to do, and I don't want to spend retirement rocking my life away on the front porch.



**ROY PRIEM, ADMIN
Graphics supervisor, Salem**

A firm "maybe." I'd like to retire early (60 or 62) because there are golf courses my spikes haven't bit into yet. I'd also like to travel and pursue some artwork while I can still see.



**DAVE KING, HWY
HMS 1, John Day**

Yes. If things work out, I'd like to retire at 60, when I'll have 35 years. I'll get just about as much retirement money then as I would get later. Besides, it would give someone else a chance to move up the ladder.



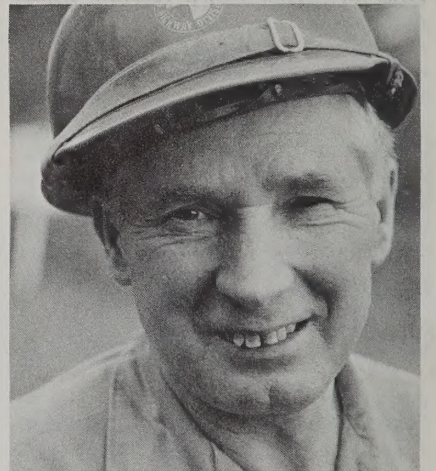
**WAYNE JOHNSON, HWY
Motor Pool, Shop supervisor, Salem**

No. Inflation is the major reason. I think that may influence others who are thinking of early retirement, also. Your job also has a lot to do with it. I really enjoy mine, and plan to work to 65, but probably no later.



**VERN SHULL, HWY
Resident engineer, Roseburg**

Yes. In my case, I'm just happy to get away from a job which I no longer enjoy. The direction the Highway Division has taken in the past several years has resulted in my job becoming increasingly difficult and unrewarding.

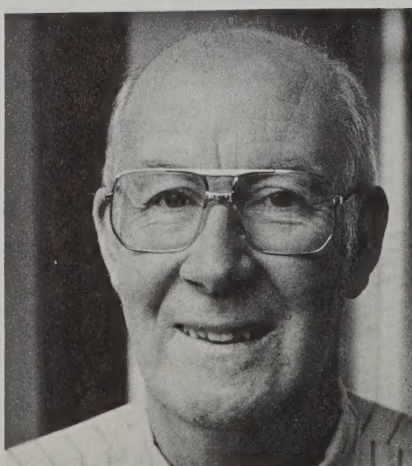
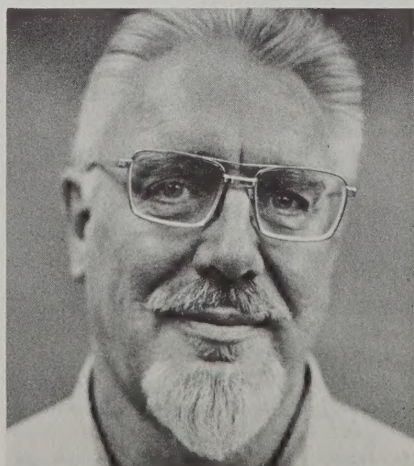


**WILLIS HULTS, PARKS
Ranger 2, Beverly Beach**

Yes, in three years. I don't want to get too old to enjoy myself. Plus, I don't know how long the social security system will last. I'm 57 and have worked hard all my life. I run and keep in good shape, so I'm looking forward to good health and keeping busy.

**DICK LENZ, HWY
Hydraulics Unit supervisor, Salem**

Yes. I have an opportunity to go into private business, hopefully by the first of next year. Although I will have to take a 40 percent cut in benefits, I'm not concerned because the business will provide more present income as well as future retirement pay. My job has been rewarding, but I'll be my own boss, make more money and have more leisure time.



**J. R. HARRINGTON, DMV
Office manager, Coquille**

Yes. By then I will have worked 40 years in a man-created time box. If the country's economy and my health will keep sound, I would like to pursue some of the endeavors, that, being subservient to other men, have been denied me. This includes service to man, of my own choosing and enjoyment, when and where I want it, and that's really what retirement is all about.

AA objectives now 'more visible'

The following is part of a series describing the different sections and units of ODOT.

The Affirmative Action Office is a tiny unit designed to help ODOT comply with a bevy of state, federal and departmental regulations.

Within the Organization and Manpower Services Branch, the two-man unit is managed by Andre Kimboko. A civil rights coordinator, Robert Brown, was hired in March. He will focus on employee counseling and some aspects of ODOT's employment practices.

The "bevy" pertains to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) programs, based on Titles VI and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act; the Office of

"As long as we get federal money, we have to comply with EEO."

Federal Contract Compliance Program; Oregon Civil rights statutes and executive orders; USDOT acts and federal executive orders; ODOT policies ... the list is almost endless.

Kimboko has been studying the laws for the past three months to develop ODOT's federally required Affirmative Action Plan. To be finished in mid-April, the plan will be reviewed by the federal government and ODOT management. Changes, if needed, will be made and the plan will roll into action next fall.

"In order to get federal funds, we have to comply with EEO laws," Kimboko said, "which are enforced by the Federal Contract Compliance Program." That office recently called for stricter enforcement of the laws. Likewise, ODOT's plan calls for closer review at the departmental level.

EEO laws apply to everyone ODOT does business with — contractors, consultants and suppliers. Laws require major construction contractors and sub-contractors to examine their employment practices to eliminate discriminatory hiring regarding race, religion or sex.

When using Federal funds, ODOT is legally forbidden to contract services from firms who are not EEO employers. ODOT and its contractors are required to seek minority participation in a variety of projects and programs — if unable to secure a federally-established amount of participation, they must explain why.

Being an EEO employer means taking "affirmative action" — the government's jargon for taking positive steps to accomplish non-discriminatory employment. It also applies to a department's involvement with contractors and suppliers. For instance, ODOT is planning to increase bidding participation by minority business enterprises (MBE).

About a year ago, ODOT financed a study to identify MBE needs in highway construction contractors.

This year, another contract is being formalized to meet those MBE needs identified in the previous study. "We anticipate that this will increase MBE participation in construction activities," Kimboko said.

"Boiling it down"

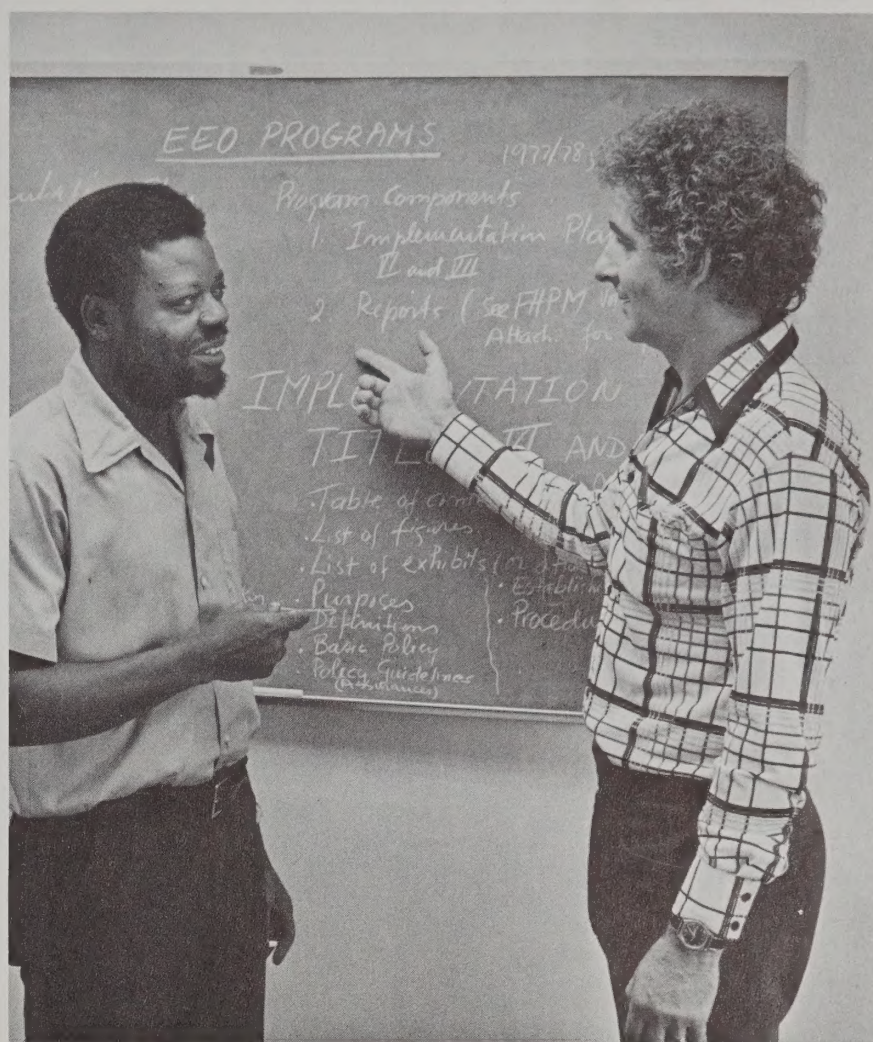
Kimboko has synthesized EEO laws affecting ODOT into six programs, which comprise the AA Plan. "This is one major difference between our proposed plan and previous ones," he said.

"Forming the information into six specific programs makes the plan more visible for employees," he said. "We will know exactly what we need to legally accomplish and how to do it."

The programs include: Review; Training; Titles VI and VII Complaints; EEO Information Dissemination; Employment Practice; and EEO Contract Compliance.

The Review Program is intended to make sure contractors, local governments and ODOT units are complying with EEO laws and FHWA regulations. The Training Program deals with internal (employee) and external training (like on-the-job training for minority workers in construction fields, and helping MBEs).

The Complaint Program deals with employees and applicants who file job



Andre Kimboko, left, with new civil rights coordinator Bob Brown.

discrimination complaints against ODOT or contractors.

ODOT's various employment policies and practices constitute the Employment Practice Program. A few of the plans in this program include more minority recruitment efforts, reviewing job announcements, methods of selecting applicants, reviewing work conditions and performance evaluation techniques.

The EEO Contract Compliance Program is designed to ensure that contractors follow EEO obligations as

specified by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance, the FHWA and other federal agencies.

The Information Dissemination Program is the vehicle the unit will use to spread the word to employees about EEO laws.

"EEO laws have been discussed with employees in the past but only as an appendage to other seminars," Kimboko said. "We plan to conduct one-day seminars."

Starting next fall (after federal approval of the AA Plan) seminars will focus on how EEO affects interviewing practices, employment counseling, contract compliance and other issues. Several employees will be involved in conducting seminars.

Seminars will be provided for region, district and resident engineers, managers, regional safety officers and foremen.

Eventually, Kimboko would like to see each division become self-sufficient in carrying out EEO and affirmative action functions. He also plans to include more employee counseling.

"Bob Brown has a strong background in counseling and will be invaluable," he said.

"Each employee needs to be more aware of EEO," Kimboko said. "The laws affect us at every level. For instance, even when we purchase miscellaneous supplies, we are obligated to consider minority vendors. We encourage employees with questions to call us."

"This unit alone can't do it — we need the support of all employees, whether they agree or not. Complying with EEO is the law, and without compliance, we could lose federal funds."

'Facts' updated

The ODOT facts booklet has been revised to include personnel and departmental changes and updated budget figures.

"Facts about ODOT and its activities" is available in limited supply from the Office of Intergovernmental and Public Affairs, room 104, Transportation Building, Salem.

Survey indicates dissatisfaction

Cont. from page one.
noted pollster.

Why is ODOT heading in the other direction?

Have older employees been dissatisfied with ODOT's organizational changes in recent years, frustrated with shrinking promotional opportunities, the past lay-offs, and the shift from being road builders to "custodians" of a deteriorating system?

Or is it simply because pursuing leisure versus the dollar is becoming more important?

According to Carl Hobson, head of Personnel Operations, the increase could easily be due to the Public Employee Retirement System's (PERS) lowering the retirement age to 60 without reducing benefits. Persons are also eligible for social security benefits at age 62, which could account for that being the "jackpot" year.

To check into the situation further, VIA surveyed a random sample of employees who retired between 1974 and 1978. The sample included 192 persons, and 134 of those retired early (the majority at 62).

Early returns point to two reasons

VIA mailed surveys only to the early retirees. They were given a list of several possible reasons, and asked to mark which reasons were pertinent. Some of the choices included: poor health; not feeling satisfied with work; benefits were as good, or almost as good as they

would be at age 65; wanted to travel; and was not happy with the way the department was being run.

Although all surveys weren't back by press time, two reasons for early retirement dominated early returns: retirement benefits and dissatisfaction with the department.

Many elaborated on their dissatisfaction. Here are a few examples:

"Since ODOT was formed, there was too much paper and not enough pavement. Also not enough money to properly maintain the highways."

"There was no chance for advancement for people in the field, and

no input allowed from the field. I had not been promoted in the 18 years with the department."

"Too many over-paid chiefs and not enough Indians to do the work. Too many projects studied to death. No wonder you're short of money."

"No backing for field personnel, especially from Salem. This causes resident engineers to not want to stick their necks out."

Complete survey results will appear in the next issue of VIA. The Candid Comment Question on page six asked for the opinions of current employees on early retirement.

PT sets grant program

A new federal program has quadrupled the money available for distribution to local transit services through the Public Transit Division.

Eric East, the division's chief planner, says Oregon will receive nearly a million dollars a year through the new federal grant program for smaller communities and rural areas. Under the Federal Highway Administration program, grants for both capital and operating expenses are allowed.

East says that the only areas in Oregon not eligible for funding are the urban in and around Portland, Salem and Eugene. He says the Division has received numerous requests for funding.

Through a formula based upon population, the Division has established a grant program that allocates a minimum of \$5,000 annually to each of Oregon's 36 counties. Previously, under the state-only General Fund appropriation for rural and small community grants, the Division handled less than a dozen contracts.

According to East, the new funding is significant in several ways. It shows an acknowledgement by the federal government of the transit needs of smaller communities, he says, and it puts the Public Transit Division in a position of being able to begin to serve the needs of the entire state.

On the job with Bob Lammert

By Shannon Priem Allen

Bob Lammert's voice over the two-way radio has been described as brusque, gravelly, and something to be reckoned with, post haste.

The district engineer in Bend is known among his subordinates and superiors for saying what's on his mind, getting things done, and commanding a respect that has been well-earned.

In person, the "toughness" disappears, although the ruddy, weathered face is lined with years of hard work, as well as worry about current and future maintenance problems in his area.

He describes the biggest challenge he faces (aside from recent road

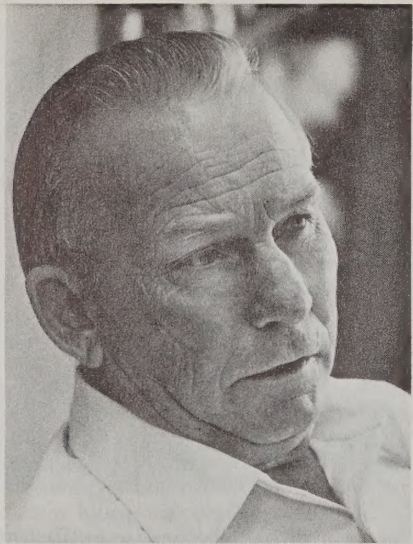
"We tend to blame our problems on environmentalists . . . but we've had it coming."

deterioration), in one word: development. Bend, his headquarters, is one of the fastest-growing areas in the state.

Growing business, subdivisions, traffic, safety issues -- and the repeated request for a Bend by-pass -- have been bounced back and forth in his office for the past few years.

The district office handles requests for road approach permits and advises developers and city and county planners as well as residents about road access, left turn refuges, grade crossings, and a host of other highway issues.

According to State Highway Engineer Scott Coulter, Lammert's challenge can be stated simply: helping



Bob Lammert: "I don't get out in the field as much as I should."

the area best control growing traffic on roads that are already over-loaded.

Planning essential

"I had it easy my first two years here," Lammert smiles, now there are piles of paper work, maps and charts scattered around his office.

"Proper planning is essential here," he says. "Access control is complicated. You have to ask how a road approach will affect highway safety now and in the future."

Every developer in Bend has been in Lammert's office, says Region 4 Engineer Dale Allen.

"He solves many problems or questions before they get to me," Allen says. "He's been a great shortstop."

Lammert has worked in Bend for eight years. Before, he worked 11 years in Medford, was a resident engineer in Brookings for three years and in Canyonville for two years.

He started with the department in 1951 at Roseburg as a draftsman. His district, in the "heart" of Oregon, includes Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, and parts of Wheeler, Harney, Klamath and Lake counties. With desert, urban, rural and snow regions, it is one of the most diverse in the state.

Lammert is shy when asked about himself, but opens up when asked about his highways. Because he has been increasingly involved in development, he says he often feels frustrated because "I don't get out in the field as much as I should, and I don't always know what's happening out there."

Target for damage

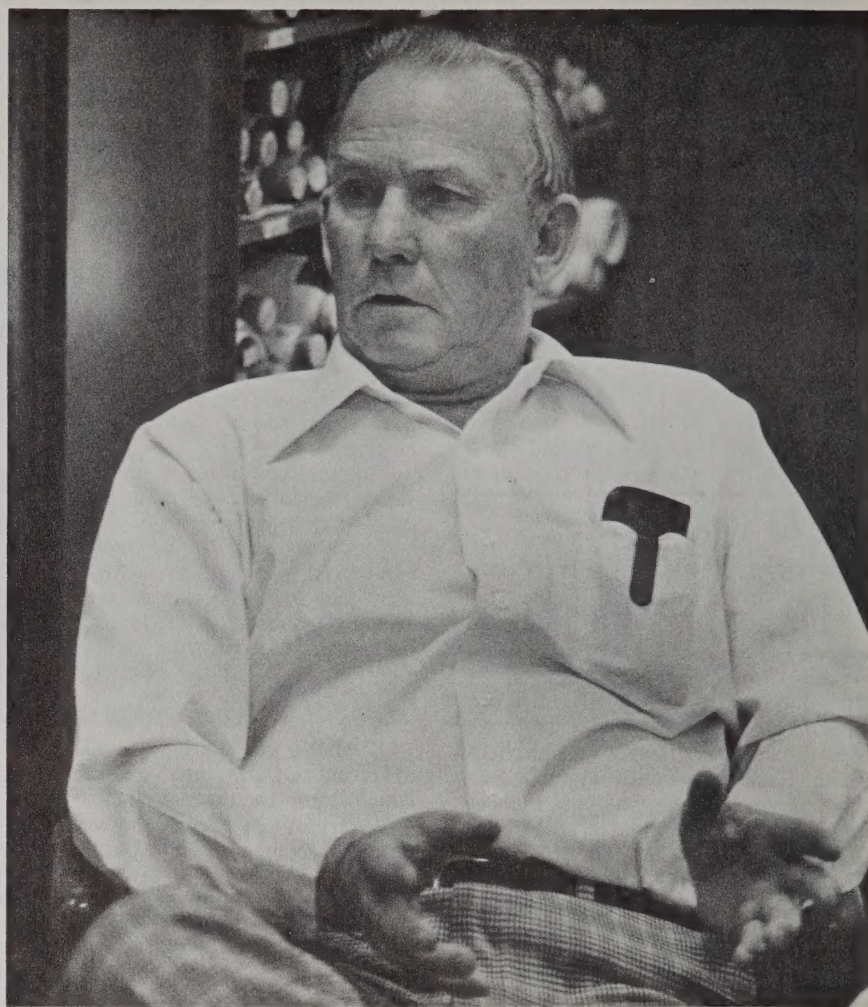
He's had reason to worry. His district suffered some of the worst damage in the state last winter.

"The damage amounts to \$2.5 million," he says, pulling the figure easily out of his head. "Part of Highway 97 has over two feet under water, there were miles of road where the pavement is literally gone -- blown up, as we say. We're working up a contract for a heavy overlay on The Dalles-Cal (US 97) Highway."

"Another five miles on the Madras-Prineville Highway and six miles on the Crooked River Highway are in really bad shape."

Road complaints have been coming in. "A man called just yesterday, in fact, about a \$250 repair bill when his car hit a pothole," Lammert says. District crews have been marking dangerous potholes with red flags. Potholes they couldn't immediately patch with asphalt were filled with gravel until more permanent repairs could be made.

Despite the dramatic "blow-ups,"



District Engineer Bob Lammert talks about the growing development in Bend.

Lammert contends, "If we have a gas tax vote tomorrow, they'd still vote it down. People have reached their limit, and I think they'll vote no on anything affecting their pockets."

Being a 28-year employee, Lammert has lived through several changes, such as the transition from the highway-building to the "environmental impact statement" era.

How does he feel about the growing restrictions placed on DEs, and the lengthy project planning process?

"We tend to blame our problems on environmentalists," he says, "but shouldn't. It's been coming -- we've torn up the countryside without thinking and never replaced it. Some of our environmental problems in general could have been avoided if we had taken the time to foresee the future."

Too many hoops

However, Lammert is skeptical about some of the "red tape" he has to follow. "We have to issue a lot more permits

now, fill out more paperwork and jump through more hoops," he says. "You need some control, however, but you can get too bogged down."

He also thinks Salem headquarters sometimes has too much control over field operations. "I used to keep sealed bids and open them in my office. Now it's handled through Salem. It takes months to get anything done."

"On the other hand, I can see where control is needed, because there have been abuses in the past. You just need a happy medium."

With a laugh, he concedes, "Oh, I do a lot of griping, I suppose, but when it really comes down to it, I can't complain. This department has given me all the breaks I had coming."

To relax, he and his family enjoy snowmobiling and other outdoor hobbies. Lammert especially enjoys hunting; however his trips tend to get farther and farther away.

"Too many people around here," he says with a smile.

Retirees let us know what's happening

Back to work?

Benjamin Davis, 5510 Windsor Island Rd., Salem, 97303. Retired 1976.

Ben and his wife have taken several trips to New York, Wyoming, Tennessee, Alabama and California, visiting relatives. They are planning another trip soon.

Ben has a woodworking shop and

enjoys photography. "We're enjoying ourselves, but I wouldn't mind going back to work," he said "since the retirement age has been lifted to 70. I've got my application in."

Planting peas

Elbie Beckman, 1440 Norway NE, Salem, 97301. Retired 1977.

Elbie has been playing more golf and generally, enjoying good health. He and his wife have taken several short trips, mainly to the coast. The garden has received more attention since Elbie retired. So far, he's got the peas and asparagus planted.

Remembering old friends

Vince Gallagher, P.O. Box 421, Sisters, 97759. Retired 1974.

"We've traveled all over the country and spent some time in Palm Springs," Vince told VIA last month. He remembers many of his old Highway

Division friends and sometimes wishes he was back on the job. "We've been pretty happy here, though," he said.

Surveying the good holes

Leslie E. Hanson, 326 Lipton Rd.,

Roseburg, 97470. Retired 1976.

The Hansons recently returned from a month-long trip to California. Leslie is taking advantage of nice Spring weather for early fishing in the high mountain lakes and then at the coast.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ: 1-b; 2-a; 3-b (.02 deaths per hundred million passenger miles via intercity bus; 13 deaths via small plane. Motorcycle deaths rate a close second, with 12.8 deaths); 4-c.

Have any interesting or unusual facts about ODOT? Send suggestions to VIA, Room 104, Transportation Building, Salem.

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